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SECRETARY RICHARDSON REAFFIRMS DOE'S COMMITMENT TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

*New Strategies to Enhance Small Business Program Will Boost Small Business
Participation Throughout the Department.*

Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson today announced a number of new steps aimed at increasing small business participation throughout the Department of Energy's (DOE) core missions and programs.

"The department has a strong record of providing opportunities to small business and has benefitted greatly from small business innovations," said Secretary Richardson. "We want to build on our record and forge new innovative partnerships with small business concerns so they can become fully involved in DOE program activities. The department has exciting opportunities for small business in energy, technical, scientific and environmental fields."

Recent guidance from the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Federal Procurement Policy, has changed the methodology used for reporting the department's prime contract awards to small business. This policy change will show a reduction in DOE's small business prime contracting goals this year, due in part to our large subcontracting base and non-profit contracts at some of our labs and sites. Despite the reporting change, the department continues to provide over \$3 billion in combined prime and subcontracting opportunities to small business, including small disadvantaged, 8(a) women-owned businesses and HUBZone small business concerns throughout its core missions and programs.

In order to build on this record, Secretary Richardson set a combined prime contracting and subcontracting goal of \$3.3 billion for Fiscal Year 2000, including the \$757.6 million in prime contracting awards to small business as assigned by the Small Business Administration. In addition, the Secretary also announced several initiatives to maximize small business utilization:

- The creation of a Small Business Committee which reports directly to him and the Deputy Secretary on the development and implementation of innovative programs by

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departmental elements and major contractors to promote small participation in DOE's technical, scientific, environmental and energy operations.

- The development of procurement tools and techniques in awarding prime contracts and subcontracts in order to fully engage small business in DOE's core mission areas; including the use of the 8(a), 8(a) pilot, Mentor Protege, and HUBZone programs, as well as anti-bundling policies.
- The development of a new policy to strengthen the small business functions in program, field and major contractor operations, including improved tracking and monitoring mechanisms to measure progress in meeting goals, as well as collaborative research and other initiatives that have an impact on small business.
- The establishment of an annual DOE-wide conference that will bring DOE program offices and major contractors together to better educate the small business community about business lines, forecasts, collaborative research, and other opportunities within the department.

The first DOE-wide Small Business conference will take place in Denver, CO, April 27-28, 2000.

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